

SHORT STORY  
OF THE DAY

## THE MINUT.

From the Boston Post.

"What do you think, girls; that old maid, Hephzibah Springer, is going to dance at our May festival? Did you ever hear of anything more ridiculous?" And Dorothy Palmer tossed her head disdainfully at the thought of what she seemed an unwarrantable proceeding.

"Oh, do tell us all about it, Dolly dear. Come, tell us all you know."

"Well, that will not take her very long," chimed in one of the sweet girls, who did not regard Dorothy in a very favorable light. "I mean, of course, dear. It will not take you long to tell the story, for it is well known you have a wonderful facility of condensing a vast amount of information in a few most refreshingly pungent remarks."

"As far as I am privileged to express an opinion I think that Dolly is a little bit envious of poor Miss Hephzibah's charms," said another. "Are you jealous that she may win your Jack from you, dear?"

"If you girls will only be quiet," remarked Dorothy, "I shall tell you the whole story. To-day I practice the Miss Villes dancing class to practice the Miss Villes, and she should be a very good dancer. Miss Villes had one of her wretched headaches and was about to dismiss the class, when what did that antiquated maiden do but step forward and volunteer to put the young folks through their paces."

"Well, in justice to our village spinster, she knows a thing or two about steps, and she became so interested that she forgot her headache and was most profuse in her compliments. 'My dear Miss Hephzibah,' she said, 'I thought myself a capital dancer, but here you are, capable of teaching me. Will you not continue to assist me? Will you not introduce some old-time dances? It will be such an innovation.'"

"I have not danced for years," answered Hephzibah, and would you believe it, girls, there were tears in the poor old creature's eyes. "But, she said, 'I will do my best for you. Let me have my choice of these people and I will put them through the evolutions of the minuet. I will introduce some old-time dances. It will be such an innovation.'"

"At last the night of the dance arrived. The town hall was crowded to its full capacity, for nearly every family in that and adjacent villages had a representative in one or another of the dances. Many were those who remembered Miss Hephzibah when she was a much younger woman. The gossiping chatter of the young people and the raked their memories, recalling events in her early life. Some of them hinted at the cause of her present single blessedness, if such it could be called, and everyone was curious to see her dance."

Miss Hephzibah was late in appearing, and her entrance was the cause of no little excitement and some admiring glances. She wore an old rose silk quilted petticoat, with an elaborately figured apron over her dress, and on her feet were high-heeled, white slippers somewhat faded and worn. She was dressed in the style of the minuet, and on her head she wore a white lace cap. She had a very fine figure, and her hair was arranged over a cushion. That hair needed no powder; it was already as white as snow. Miss Villes herself came forward to greet Miss Hephzibah.

"What a lovely dress!" she said. "Whatever shall we do? Your partner has not come. I am afraid you will be very much annoyed, but the best we can do is to find you a partner. Let me have my choice of these people and I will put them through the evolutions of the minuet. I will introduce some old-time dances. It will be such an innovation." At such a time as this one cannot choose, she said, "There is no other alternative. Mr. Brooks is very kind. I have no doubt that I will find him a most acceptable partner."

A moment later she found herself curtseying to a stately old gentleman, who was dressed in a suit of black, with a white waistcoat, and a white cravat. He was the oldest of the party, and he was the only one who had been to the school of the grace of the old school. The audience applauded her every movement, and at the conclusion of the minuet she had repeated. Those who came to see her remained to admire, and Hephzibah, for reasons best known to herself, was extremely happy.

It was not long after that when she left her little cottage and went to live as mistress at the house of the minister. The place, then the truth was revealed. Mr. Brooks was none other than the sweet heart of Hephzibah's youth. The two had quarreled after having danced a minuet, and he had gone away. Forty years ago, rich, yet faithful, he returned to her, and a reconciliation had been the result.

And Miss Villes, having learned somewhat of the early state of affairs, was so good for her as the instrument of the reunion, and in the years that followed she was the esteemed friend of Mrs. Hephzibah Brooks and husband.

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SIT. WANTED—Good carpenter; understands all kinds of carpentry. Address T. 702, Journal office.

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